

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL. By LOUISA M. ALCOTT. Author of "Little Women." 16mo, pp. 253. Roberts Brothers.

Miss Alcott's new story deserves quite as great a success as her famous "Little Women," and we dare say will secure it. She has written, we suppose, chiefly for the young, but she has produced a book which child and parent alike ought to read, for it is neither above the comprehension of the one nor below the taste of the other. Her boys and girls are so fresh, hearty, and natural, the incidents of her story are so true to life, and the tone is so thoroughly healthy, that a chapter of the "Old-Fashioned Girl" wakes up the unaccustomed better life within us almost as effectually as an hour spent in the company of good, honest, sprightly children. "The Old-Fashioned Girl," Polly Milton, is a delightful creature who has been taught to respect her elders, to be modest, simple, and obedient, to do all she can for the happiness of other people, to dress sensibly according to her means, to abjure flirting, to hate deception, to love her own family, and to make puddings. But we hasten to add that she is not a bit of a prig, and would make a miserable figure in a Sunday-School library of goody books. She is a visitor, through the first half of the volume, at the house of a fashionable family in Boston, where the young people have all the modern small-vices that beset their years; where brother and sister quarrel, girls are coquettish and fine ladies before they are old enough to leave the nursery, and envy, jealousy, meanness, slander, lies, and extravagance are as prevalent in the school-room as in the most favored circles of our best society. In the course of the six or seven years occupied in the progress of the story, Polly succeeds, with the aid of an opportune bankruptcy in reforming this unhappy family. Meanwhile the young paragon has become a music-teacher and (we say it with bated breath) a member of a circle of intellectual young women of rather Bohemian proclivities, and has suffered a good deal on account of a certain young man, besides making another young man suffer on her account. However, all comes right at last, and the story closes with marriages enough for a regular novel.

The principal charm of the book is in the lively dialogue. Miss Alcott is not especially successful in reproducing the conversation of young gentlemen from college, though the talk of the young ladies and the boys and girls is as natural as life. We feel disposed to find fault with a few of the incidents,—with the proper and prudent Polly, for example, lopping back in a balcony seat at the theater, while her admirer, Mr. Sydney, leans over her shoulder from the seat behind and fans her. Maybe good young ladies of twenty behave that way in Boston, but we have our doubts about it. We have much more serious fault to find with Miss Alcott's grammar. Trifling violations of the rules of Murray we can bear, for they only make the dialogue more natural; but parases such as "Each pays what *they* can," are too much for critical endurance.

MEN AND MYSTERIES OF WALL-ST. By JAMES K. MEDBURY. 12mo, pp. 341. Fields, Osgood & Co.

Mr. Medbury has been fortunate in his choice of a subject, and fortunate in the time of his book's appearance. The mysteries of Wall-st. have an irresistible fascination for the general public, and never has curiosity been more intense or wider spread than during the last year of extraordinary speculations and dramatic catastrophes. Mr. Medbury is a literary man by profession, but he has studied the history and operations of the street with so much care that he has become an efficient guide through the dim, labyrinthine, and hazy explanations are clear, minute, and entertaining. He describes the organization, uses, and rules of the Stock Exchange, the Gold-room, the Mining Board, and the other great institutions of the market; he tells us the difference between various classes of bankers, brokers, and operators; he interprets the jargon of the street; and he explains very fully the various methods by which money can be made and lost through sales, loans, calls, put-options, and other inventions for dealing with fictitious commodities. We know of no source to which the reader ignorant of speculation can better refer for enlightenment. Mr. Medbury sketches the history of Wall-st., giving an account of the most famous operations, and gives of the past as well as the present day, and many will be surprised to learn that the mania for stock-gambling was quite as strong among our forefathers as it is now, and the operations were, in proportion to the amount of capital actually concentrated in the street, quite as heavy in their time as they have been since the war. The portraits of famous operators, Jacob Little, Henry Kepp, Vanderbilt, Drew, Fisk, the Jeromes, Durant, and others, are rather meager, but interesting as far as they go, and some of the stories told of them we believe are comparatively new, and certainly are amusing. As a specimen of Mr. Medbury's style and an illustration of Wall-st. morality, we shall give one extract:

"Four years ago a drab, now dissolved, had a clerk named Jackson, who was simply invaluable. He never made mistakes—could figure up the most complicated transactions in a twinkling, and had delivered five million. He had caught the cue at once, and would have taken his cut in court. Jackson was innocent. He certainly sent over the whole lot. The injured brokers were in an unhappy plight. Their check was equivalent to a bank note. They were short with a vengeance, and with no redress.

"The members of the house in which Jackson was employed were keen of mind, and it was left to them to get at the truth. In view of the direful state of the firm, we were reduced to the point of the cleric."

One evening they called him into the inner office. "Now, Jackson, we understand how the matter occurred. It was a natural thing for you to do better. Of course you would never steal from anybody. If those shares are produced by noon to-morrow there will be no trouble. Other wise—"

Jackson was not a character for a novel. He neither turned pale nor bit his lip. They might do their worst, but he was not in the conspiracy. Next morning, however, a package carefully tied, and containing the equivalent of the missing shares, was found by the office-boy who had been sent to bring it. The package was sent to a partner, sent it over to Smith, Jones & Co., and Jackson kept at his desk without being troubled with further annoyances. Two years after, when the house broke up, the partners divided the millions among themselves, and to-day is one of the greatest men in the street.

Brokers have a certain phrase implying a peculiar injustice to which customers are subjected. "Speculating money is the best form of investment." That is, a broker may be compelled to sell at a loss, and yet, if he can't do better, of course you would never steal from anybody. If those shares are produced by noon to-morrow there will be no trouble. Other wise—"

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